

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Formreceived AUG 2 1983
date entered SEP 15 1983See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

Valdosta Commercial Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

Roughly bounded by Savannah Ave., Lee, Toombs,
and Valley Sts.

street & number

See Continuation Sheet

N/A
not for publication

city, town

Valdosta

N/A
vicinity of

state

Georgia

code 013

county

Lowndes

code 185

3. Classification

Category

☒ district☐ building(s)☐ structure☐ site☐ object

Ownership

☐ public☐ private☒ both

Public Acquisition

N/A in process

☐ being considered

Status

☒ occupied☐ unoccupied☐ work in progress

Accessible

☒ yes: restricted☐ yes: unrestricted☐ no

Present Use

☐ agriculture☒ commercial☐ educational☐ entertainment☒ government☐ industrial☐ military☐ museum☐ park☐ private residence☒ religious☐ scientific☐ transportation☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name

Multiple Owners (more than 50)

street & number

city, town

vicinity of

state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Superior Court

Lowndes County Courthouse

street & number

city, town

Valdosta

state GA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title

Historic Structures

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

Field Survey: Lowndes

date

County, GA 1981

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

Historic Preservation Section, Georgia Department of Natural
Resources

city, town

Atlanta

state GA

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Description

The Valdosta Commercial Historic District encompasses the contiguous historic commercial and civic buildings in downtown Valdosta. The district is located on a low rise of ground at the approximate center of Valdosta's irregularly shaped city limits. Roughly square in shape, the district includes all or parts of nine city blocks arranged in a regular gridiron pattern. These blocks are subdivided generally into long, narrow, rectangular lots fronting onto principal streets and backing up to alleys or service courts. Buildings on these lots are for the most part one to three story brick commercial structures dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These buildings are densely grouped within the district; many share party walls and common setbacks from the streets. Styles of architecture represented in the district include Victorian Eclectic, Queen Anne, Commercial, Renaissance Revival, and Beaux Arts. Brick, the principal building material, is used both structurally and decoratively throughout the district. It is complemented by stone, cast iron, plate glass, wood, and pressed metal detailing. Some storefronts and a few front facades have been remodeled. The interiors of many buildings are relatively intact and maintain their original wood, plaster, and pressed metal finishes. Landscaping in the district is confined to the county courthouse square. In addition to commercial storefront buildings, the district also includes the 1906 County Courthouse, the 1908 City Hall (originally the United States Courthouse and Post Office) and a 1905 Methodist Church, all located along the northern tier of lots, and turn-of-the-century warehouses in the southeastern portion.

Non-contributing Buildings

The majority of the non-contributing buildings in the district are historic buildings that have been remodeled in a manner that detracts from the character and appearance of the district. These are classified as intrusions. A few buildings are described as having "potential significance." These are historic structures which have been altered by the addition of a false metal facade which if removed could reveal a relatively intact structure. A few non-historic structures, built within the last fifty years but not detracting from the character of the area, are scattered throughout the district. Individual buildings in all three categories are identified on the enclosed district map.

Boundary

The nominated property, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed maps, consists of the contiguous architecturally and historically significant properties in the area of historic commercial and civic development in Valdosta.

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Location & Representation

Continuation sheet

Existing Surveys

Item number

2 & 6

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Location

Valdosta Commercial Historic District is located in Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia. It encompasses an area of the central business district bounded approximately by Lee Street on the east, Savannah Avenue on the south, Toombs Street on the west, and Valley Street on the north.

Representation in Existing Surveys

The Lowndes County Courthouse, located within the district, was listed in the National Register on September 18, 1980 as part of the County Courthouses of Georgia thematic nomination.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1860 - 1930s **Builder/Architect** Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary Statement of Significance

The Valdosta Commercial Historic District is historically significant in terms of community planning and development, architecture, commerce, and politics and government. In terms of community planning and development, the district is significant as the center of a community that was established and designated county seat in response to the laying of railroad tracks through a previously unsettled part of Lowndes County at the middle of the nineteenth century. In terms of architecture, the district is significant for its collection of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century commercial and civic buildings that represents prevailing historic design principles and construction practices. In terms of commerce, the district is significant as the historic commercial center of Valdosta and Lowndes County since 1860. In terms of politics and government, the district is significant as the historic center of political and governmental activity in Valdosta and Lowndes County. Those areas of significance support property eligibility under National Register Criteria A and C.

Community Planning and Development

Valdosta, Lowndes County's fourth county seat since its creation in 1823, was laid out on previously undeveloped land to take advantage of the Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad, the first railroad to cross Lowndes County and provide it with access to the port of Savannah. In 1859 enterprising citizens of Troupville, then the Lowndes county seat located four miles from the right-of-way of the new railroad, elected to relocate their town adjacent to the coming railroad tracks. Land was purchased and laid out, and Valdosta was incorporated in 1860, an example in Georgia of the many towns whose very existence was determined by the location of the railroads. Valdosta was laid out with a gridiron street plan and a courthouse square characteristic of many county seats in Georgia and elsewhere in the mid-nineteenth century.

Valdosta's initial growth was halted almost immediately by the Civil War. But late-nineteenth century railroad expansion in South Georgia which brought two additional railroads to the city in 1889 and 1899, combined with the invention of fertilizers that greatly improved the productivity of the surrounding land, initiated a period of intense growth. The city's population more than doubled between 1890 and 1900. In 1898 Valdosta became the smallest city in the nation to install a street railway system. The Valdosta Commercial Historic District contains a sizeable portion of the original gridiron area laid out in 1860, including the important county courthouse square. The majority of the remaining historic commercial and civic buildings in Valdosta are located in the district and date from its period of most intense development.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Blanchard, Haley. "Draft National Register Nomination: Valdosta Commercial Historic District". October, 1982. On file at State Historic Preservation Office, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia. (This National Register nomination is based largely on the information contained in this document.) See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Approximately 25 acres

Quadrangle name Valdosta, Georgia

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	7
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2	8	2	2	8	0
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3	4	1	2	8	7	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

1	7
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2	8	2	1	0	0
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3	4	1	2	7	9	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C

1	7
---	---

2	8	1	9	0	0
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3	4	1	2	8	3	0
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D

1	7
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2	8	1	8	1	0
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3	4	1	3	0	4	0
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E

1	7
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2	8	2	1	4	0
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3	4	1	3	1	8	0
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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The district boundary, outlined with a heavy black line on the enclosed map, circumscribes the intact contiguous historic commercial and civic properties in downtown Valdosta.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	N/A	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Carolyn Brooks, National Register Researcher

Historic Preservation Section

organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date July 25, 1983

street & number 270 Washington Street, S.W. telephone 404/656-2840

city or town Atlanta state GA 30334

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Elizabeth A. Lyon

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 7/27/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Patrick Andrews
Keeper of the National Register

date 9/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Architecture

The major part of Valdosta's commercial architecture dates from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the period of the city's greatest growth and prosperity. The collection of buildings located in the historic district provides an excellent picture of local adaptation of styles, design principles, and construction techniques prevalent nationally during this period. Popular styles such as the Victorian Eclectic, Queen Anne, Renaissance Revival, and Beaux Arts are well represented in their local forms. Buildings in the district, which range for the most part from one to three stories in height, share party walls and common setbacks from the street. Brick is the predominant building material, used in conjunction with cast iron, plate glass, wood, and stone. Earlier buildings display such features as segmentally-arched window openings, corbelling, stringcourses, and cornices typical of late-nineteenth century Victorian commercial architecture. Later buildings have more classical detailing of the type associated with turn-of-the-century and early-twentieth century revival styles.

Buildings by a number of locally and regionally important architects are present in the district, reflecting Valdosta's exceptional early-twentieth century prosperity. Stephen F. Fulgham (1857-1928) in his approximately ten-year residence in Valdosta designed a number of the most imposing commercial buildings in the district including 107-111 South Ashley Street, and the Converse Building at 121-123 North Patterson and also the 1898 First Baptist Church. Locally and regionally prominent Lloyd Greer (1885-1952) designed the 1908 Post Office (now Valdosta City Hall). The 1906 Lowndes County Courthouse (listed in the National Register on September 18, 1980) is the work of Frank P. Milburn (1868-1926), architect of many courthouses and railroad stations throughout Georgia and the Southeast. Regionally prominent Edward E. Dougherty (1876-1943), in association with his firm Dougherty and Gardner of Nashville, Tennessee, designed the 1924 Daniel Ashley Hotel.

Commerce

The Valdosta Commercial Historic District has served as the center of commercial life in Valdosta and Lowndes County from 1860 to the present day. The district's current character and appearance result largely from Valdosta's most intense period of commercial growth in the early years of the twentieth century when it became the world's largest marketing center for Sea Island Cotton and an important headquarters for the naval stores industry as well. Activities such as wholesaling and retailing, cotton factoring and warehousing, light manufacturing (a buggy factory), banking, professional services, hotel accommodations (of four hotels only the 1924 Daniel Ashley remains), and entertainment were located in the historic commercial area as the city developed.

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Politics/Government

The district is significant as the historic center of political and government activity in Lowndes County since 1860. The 1906 Lowndes county courthouse and the 1908 Post Office and Federal Building (now City Hall) aptly illustrate this aspect of the area's significance. Relatively few cities in Georgia feature historic city and county government buildings.

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Jones, Charles C. The History of Georgia. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1883.

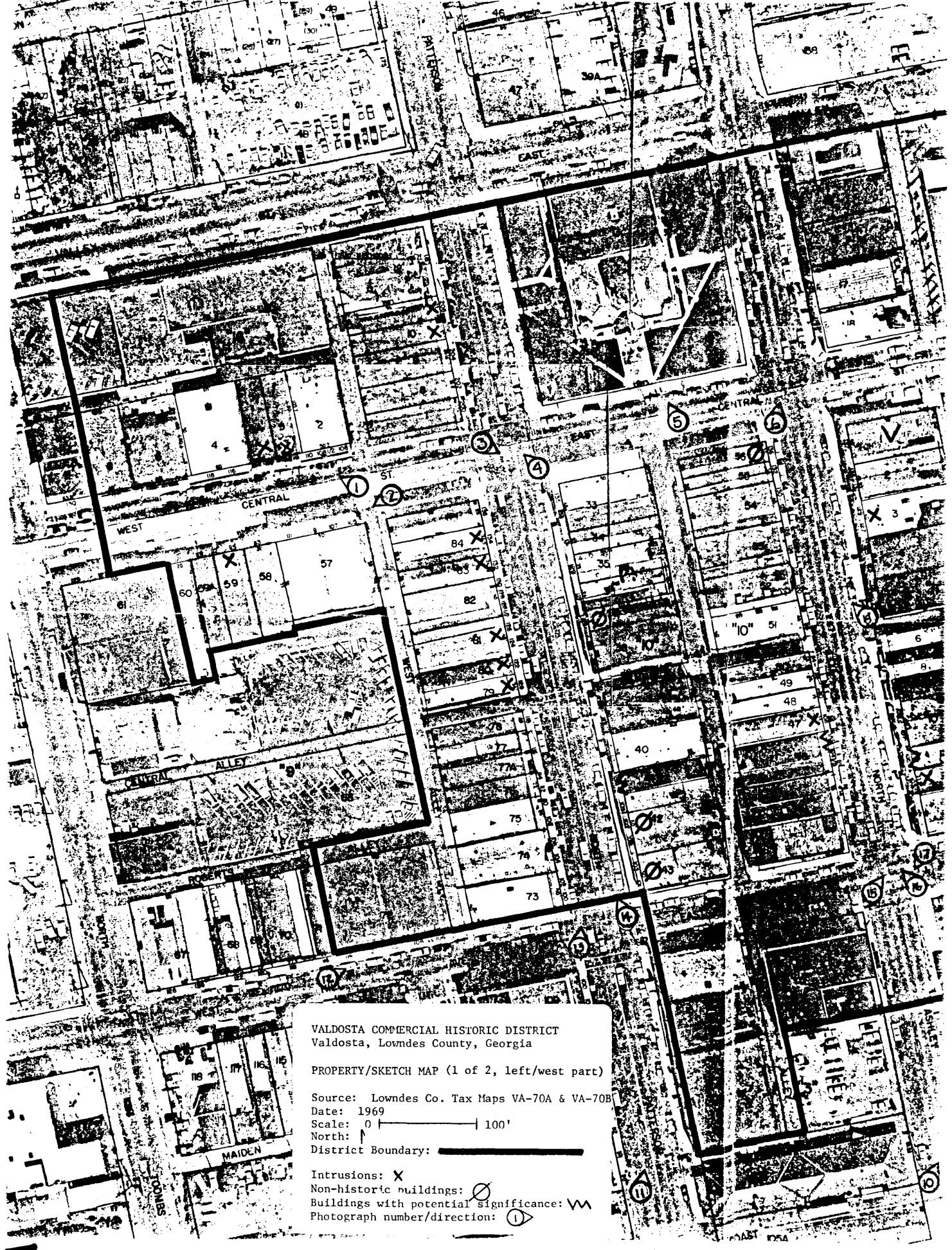
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Sanborn Maps of Valdosta, 1922.

Shelton, Jane Twitty. Pines and Pioneers, A History of Lowndes County, Georgia 1825-1900. Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Co., 1976.

Valdosta Times, 1900, 1901, 1902, 1921, 1928.

Williams, Bion. "Valdosta Commercial Historic District". 1982. On file at State Historic Preservation Office, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.



VALDOSTA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia

PROPERTY/SKETCH MAP (1 of 2, left/west part)

Source: Lowndes Co. Tax Maps VA-70A & VA-70B

Date: 1969

Scale: 0 100'

North: ↑

District Boundary: ————

Intrusions: X

Non-historic buildings: O

Buildings with potential significance: W

Photograph number/direction: ①

VALDOSTA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Valdosta, Lowndes County, Georgia

PROPERTY/SKETCH MAP (2 of 2, right/east part)

For legend, see Part 1 of map.

